



DSHS has identified six activities proven to make an impact on obesity. These are the topics of the six videos on the DVD:

- Increased Breastfeeding
- Increased Physical Activity
- Increased Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables
- Decreased Consumption of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages
- Decreased Consumption of High-Energy-Dense Foods
- Decreased TV Viewing

INCREASING BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding makes it easier for a woman to lose pregnancy weight, and breastfed babies are less likely to be overweight. It's not just initiating breastfeeding that matters: the longer a child breastfeeds, the less likely he/she is to be overweight, and exclusive breastfeeding may have a stronger effect than breastfeeding combined with formula.

There are a host of other important health benefits of breastfeeding, which is why exclusive breastfeeding is recommended up to six months of age with continued breastfeeding for at least 12 months and thereafter as long as mutually desired.

It wasn't that long ago that 100% of babies were breastfed. Currently, only one in 10 Texas women exclusively breastfeed for six months. The environment needs to protect, promote and support breastfeeding to make it a feasible choice for Texas moms. Routine practices in hospitals and aggressive marketing of breast milk substitute often undermine breastfeeding.

When mothers work outside the home, they may encounter rigid schedules, lack of support from employers and co-workers, and difficulties in finding the time to breastfeed or express milk for their infants. Mothers may also lack access to health care professional support and peer support when they encounter difficulties. Of the 583 hospitals in Texas, only three are designated as Baby-Friendly hospitals – an important designation that recognizes hospitals that have implemented standards of care that optimally support breastfeeding.

The video features a community resource that provides a convenient place for mothers to comfortably breastfeed and connect with other mothers and/or lactation consultants as needed, and the resulting impact on the community. This community-supported change helps the local hospital move one step closer to becoming Baby-Friendly.



INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Take a look around your community: is it easy and safe to take a walk or ride a bike? Do you have access to parks, open spaces and places to recreate? Do you have trails, gyms, and public transit nearby? Does your community offer bike lanes?

We've effectively engineered physical activity out of our lives. Our environment currently makes it easier to take in more calories than we expend. Living an active lifestyle shouldn't be more expensive: all Texans should have access to places where we can be physically active.

Many communities today are characterized by disconnected, dead-end streets and are missing sidewalks, greenways and bike lanes. Communities these days are built for cars rather than people.

Recent studies show that community design can impact an individual's physical activity level: people who report having access to sidewalks are 28% more likely to be active, while people reporting access to walking/jogging trails are 55% more likely to be active.

The video features hike-and-bike trails in two very different communities.

INCREASING CONSUMPTION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

In previous generations, getting produce directly from the farm was the norm. Today, produce travels an average of 1200–1500 miles from farm to table.

Many barriers prevent adequate consumption of fruits and vegetables, including cost, access and availability. All communities need access to grocery stores that offer a wide variety of quality, nutritious foods at lower prices, so everyone has the ability to purchase and consume a variety of healthy food.

A sustainable local food system helps maintain a vital community by providing access, availability and affordability to fresh produce straight from the farm. Local food is usually picked at the height of ripeness, offering the best of what is in season and often reaching a community within one or two days of being harvested.

The video features a farmers' market, as well as a voucher program for low-income families to use at the market.

DECREASING CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES

These beverages comprise the largest single source of calories in the US diet, which is not that surprising since the standard portion size of these types of beverages has increased approximately 33% since the 1960s and hundreds of new beverages are introduced each year. About 1/3 of all calories from added sugars consumed daily are from sweetened beverages – particularly soda, which is the number one source of sugar in the American diet.



Examples of policy and environmental change that can address this issue:

- Ensure access to quality drinking water throughout the community in all public facilities.
- Support of nutritionally-healthy environment wherever beverages are sold/found through strategic product placement and pricing methods.
- Minimize the impact of advertising and promotion of sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Encourage efforts to establish a work environment that supports good nutrition including reduction of vending machines selling sugar-sweetened beverages.

The video features a business that has made sugar-sweetened beverages a less obvious choice and water more accessible to its employees through a few simple changes.

DECREASING CONSUMPTION OF HIGH-ENERGY-DENSE FOODS

Energy Density (ED) is the amount of energy/calories in a particular weight of food. For the same amount of calories, a person can eat a larger portion of food low in ED than a food high in ED. Low ED foods tend to have high water content, lots of fiber and/or little fat: they don't pack a lot of calories into each bite.

The total number of food service establishments has almost doubled in the last three decades. Unfortunately, low ED foods are not usually the norm in restaurants, and the standard portion sizes often provide enough food for two people. Stores, restaurants, vending machines, cafeterias, advertising and product placement all emphasize high ED food choices. The environment must make it easier for people to choose low ED foods. This can be done through changing access, cost and/or availability of low ED foods vs. high ED foods.

The video features a college campus cafeteria and a business that have made healthy eating the easy choice for patrons.

REDUCING TV VIEWING

Televisions are now prevalent throughout American communities and homes. In addition to households, TVs can now be found in airports, cars, hospitals, grocery stores, dentist and doctor offices, malls and restaurants, among other places.

Studies have found a direct correlation between the number of hours children and adults watch television and the prevalence of obesity. Research also shows a link between TV viewing in childhood and adult obesity. In addition to displacing physical activity with TV viewing and consuming more calories while watching TV, television viewers are exposed repeatedly to marketing for high-energy-dense foods. An opportunity exists for Texas communities to take the initiative and implement TV viewing practices in their healthcare settings, daycares and home environments.

The video features a daycare that does not have televisions, and a parent education program that includes the benefits of not watching TV and ideas for alternative activities.

